

VZCZCXRO2471
RR RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR
DE RUEHLI #0611 0720939
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 120939Z MAR 08
FM AMEMBASSY LISBON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6695
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 000611

SIPDIS

NOFORN
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/04/2018
TAGS: [AF](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [PO](#)
SUBJECT: PORTUGAL'S ADDITIONAL ISAF CONTRIBUTIONS

REF: A. SECSTATE 19516
[1](#)B. USDAO LISBON 291217Z FEB 08 (6879007108)

Classified By: AMBASSADOR, REASONS 1.4 (B,D)

[1](#)1. (U) Action request. See paragraphs 6 and 7.

[1](#)2. (C) Summary. The Portuguese Defense Minister told us Portugal will announce the contribution of a second OMLT before the Bucharest Summit. To encourage additional contributions, we recommend that other ISAF allies and the NATO SYG engage the Portuguese. Although we will continue to press for both, it would be useful to know whether defense planners would prefer additional OMLTs or the reintroduction of a Quick Reaction Force, in order to target more effectively our own lobbying efforts. End summary.

Good News: One More OMLT

[1](#)3. (C) Portuguese Minister of Defense Nuno Severiano Teixeira told Ambassador February 28 that Portugal would contribute an additional Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team (OMLT) to NATO's ISAF operations in Afghanistan, beyond the OMLT already pledged (Ref B). Severiano Teixeira said the announcement would be made before the Bucharest Summit.

Engaging on Further Contributions

[1](#)4. (C) ISAF contributions have been a critical issue in Portugal since the Portuguese announced in October 2007 that they would not renew the mandate of the company-strength Quick Reaction Force (QRF) when it expires in August 2008. Portuguese officials committed a C-130 and an OMLT at that time, in what they considered a "shift" in contributions, rather than a draw-down.

[1](#)5. (C) We have pressed the Portuguese extensively and on many levels to expand their contributions to the ISAF effort, including during Ambassador's initial conversations with the Foreign Minister and Defense Minister. While overall financial constraints plus individual budget cycle needs make a complete reversal of the QRF withdrawal decision difficult, we should keep in mind the reintroduction of a QRF in following cycles as a secondary goal.

[1](#)6. (C) We believe we should push for as many as three more OMLTs or to reintroduce the QRF in a later cycle. While it would be both politically and financially difficult for Portugal to make these contributions, they could do it. While we will continue to push for both OMLTs and a QRF, it would be useful to hear from defense planners which they consider most important, in order to target our lobbying efforts most effectively.

[1](#)7. (C/NF) In many of our conversations, Portuguese officials have told us that it would be useful to have other allies weigh in, to avoid the appearance that it is only the U.S.

who is concerned. To that end, Ambassador and DATT have consulted with their Polish embassy counterparts. The Poles (locally, anyway) are open to helping us press the GOP for additional troop commitments. To complement our own initiatives, we suggest that Washington and embassies to other active ISAF partners engage the GOP to encourage further contributions.

Stephenson